



The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians (Greek Culture in the Roman World)

By Professor Kendra Eshleman

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This book examines the role of social networks in the formation of identity among sophists, philosophers and Christians in the early Roman Empire. Membership in each category was established and evaluated socially as well as discursively. From clashes over admission to classrooms and communion to construction of the group's history, integration into the social fabric of the community served as both an index of identity and a medium through which contests over status and authority were conducted. The juxtaposition of patterns of belonging in Second Sophistic and early Christian circles reveals a shared repertoire of technologies of self-definition, authorization and institutionalization and shows how each group manipulated and adapted those strategies to its own needs. This approach provides a more rounded view of the Second Sophistic and places the early Christian formation of 'orthodoxy' in a fresh context.

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Review

"This is an engaging book, written in a clear and often perky style, with some but not too much sociological jargon. Eshleman has read very widely, quotes her ancient texts in the original and translates them, and gives the reader much food for thought."

Sehepunkte

"This is much more than a "first" book, however highly one may rank it; it is a book which masterly reveals the 'common set of culturally available strategies of self-definition' in use by both pagan pepaideumenoī and Christian intellectuals of the Imperial age."

Dimitris Karambelas, Bryn Mawr Classical Review

About the Author

Kendra Eshleman is an Assistant Professor of Classical Studies at Boston College.

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